WHAT though the skies be cold and gray
And winds be wild and shrill,
Love's messenger shall find his way
Across the vale and hill:
For sunlight he shall have your face,
For stars—two eyes that shine
Where my heart has its dwelling place—
Your own, dear Valentine!

He turns to neither left nor right,
But straight ahead he goes;
His guide is Hope, whose footsteps light
The sunset pathway knows;
He bears my message in his scrip,
A song whose every line
Shall turn to music on your lip,
My own dear Valentine!

Oh, when you hear his eager knock
Upon the door begin,
Make haste to lift the heavy lock
And bid young Cupid in.
Glad then shall gleam the skies above,
And glad this heart of mine
To be at last with her I love—
With you, dear Valentine!
—Frank Demster Sherman, in Ladies' Home Journal.

IT WAS the day before St. Valentine's, and Clare Clancey and Katie Wood, after pausing a little before the show window, entered the small uptown shop, and were shown by a lady in attendance a number of choice valentines that came within reach of their purses. The two girls were great friends, each just 14, and pretty and full of fun. They were going to send this year a number of valentines to other friends and relatives, and had come in together to select them.

As they stood before the little show-case filled with those dainty combinations of paper lace and bright color so fascinating to the heart of youth and, ah, me! to the memory of age, perhaps, and as they lifted the filmy overlays to read the cunningly hid verses beneath they did not notice that standing in the door was a feeble old man leaning on a cane and watching them. His hair was rather long and silver white. His face was cleanly shaven, and he had a large nose, a rather childish mouth and clear blue eyes. As he moved away the two girls heard his step and turned.

"Oh!" exclaimed Clare, whispering, "there is old Mr. Fessenden! He lives next door to us and is a cranky old bachelor. Let's send him a valentine."

The other girl nodded. Then they watched him a moment through the window as he paused to look in.

"He comes every year to look at the valentines," said the shopwoman.

"Show us some funny ones," said Clare. "Some about old bachelors."

The girls were not cruel; they were thoughtless. They picked out a highly colored picture of a fierce-looking old man in a house that was in wretched order, and under which were the following lines:

AN OLD BACHELOR.

"You think yourself extremely wise,
Since all your worthless life
You've lived alone without the care
And love of a tender wife.
Perhaps, indeed, you've vainly tried
To wed, your whole life through,
And were so glum and crusty that
No wife would live with you."

They did not like the word "worthless," because Clare said she had never heard that he dissipated in any way, but Katie said it did not mean that, but only meant that his life had been worthless because he hadn't married. By and by they went across the street to a bright red letter box and dropped in all their purchases.

As they recrossed they were talking busily and did not notice that a cable car was clanging its bell wildly and that the gripman was making a frantic effort to stop it. But suddenly each felt herself pulled hastily backward, and realized that they had been drawn from in front of the deadly cable car just in time. Each gave a little scream and turned to thank her rescuer. It was the old gentleman, Mr. Fessenden. He had dropped his cane and leaned on them, trembling from the effort. The girls were abashed, and blushed and stammered. Clare hastily picked up his cane, and he thanked her courteously. They crossed the street together in the direction of the little shop.

"I suppose you were so taken up with the valentines you are sending that you did not notice the car," said the old gentleman, gently. "I used to be very fond of them myself. Suppose we all go in and look at them a little."

The girls could not refuse and shamefacedly entered. The shopwoman smiled at them knowingly, but they only smiled back in a feeble and sickly way. The old gentleman selected two valentines that the girls had not felt able to buy.

"I want you to have these," he said, "to remember me by and to make you think to be always very careful when you cross the street."

The girls thanked him faintly with downcast eyes. Then he bade them a courtly adieu. They noticed how feeble he was as he limped away and wondered how he could have had strength enough to save them from the car. Then as they went out, each holding a prettily ornamented envelope, they looked at each other in shame and regret. Clare was the first to speak.

"Let's send him another," she said. "They have some beautiful ones down the street further. Let's go down there."

They counted their money as they went along and put it all together. By and by they came out of the shop below with a valentine that, instead of being in an envelope, rose to the dignity of a beautiful box, tied with pink and blue ribbons.

"I would give anything if we could only get that old letter box open," said Clare, and, passing, they frowned at it as if it were to blame for everything.

II.

Mr. Fessenden on his way home paused here and there to rest. He was not so old as he looked, but had been ill for many years, and the sudden exertion had been unusual and too much for him. When he reached his home, which, as Clare had said, was next to her own—he climbed the steps with difficulty and was trembling violently as he gained the top. His old servant who let him in helped him to bed, where he often spent the greater part of the day.

As he lay back amid the pillows he was thinking of the two rosy cheeked girls and the valentines, and then his memory went back and back, and he was thinking of another rosy cheeked girl for whom long ago he had bought other valentines. They had been sweethearts for awhile, and it was nearly 40 years now since they had quarreled—just 40 years to-morrow. The old gentleman closed his eyes that he might remember more clearly. It had been about a valentine, too; a foolish quarrel. She had sent it to him in fun, of course, but he had been sensitive, and he had recognized her handwriting. He had gone to her accusingly and she had not denied it. So then they had quarreled and parted.

"You will be sorry some time," he had said to her, as he turned away.

"When I am I will send you another valentine—a beautiful one, with sweet verses on it," she had answered; and since that day he had been waiting for it.

He had loved her dearly, and he believed she had loved him in return. At first he had expected the valentine surely with the coming of each February. Then by and by her parents had moved to the city, and his hope grew fainter each year. Later he had come to the city, too, but he did not know her address. He had never married. He told himself that she must have married long ago and that the valentine would never come. And yet he had never ceased to think of it when the day came around, and in his heart he had never ceased to look for it. When the shop windows were filled with valentines he would go from one to another, looking at them all and wondering which she would send. He had done this more and more as he grew older, and to-day he had bought valentines for the two little girls because one of them—Katie—had reminded him of the little girl for whom he had bought valentines so long ago.

"If it does not come to-morrow," he thought, with a faint smile, "it will be too late." For he had been more feeble than usual this winter, and his doctor had told him that he could hardly hope to live through another. Then he closed his eyes and slept, and perhaps as he slept he dreamed.

He slept so late the next morning that his old servant was alarmed, but near noon he awoke and asked for his mail. The servant brought it. There were two or three small envelopes, letters, probably, and one package—a handsome white box, tied with blue and pink ribbons. Then he put out his hand tremblingly and touched it. He wished to be sure that it was not a part of his dreams. He was so pale that the old servant was frightened.

"Are you ill—worse?" he asked.

"No—no! I am well. Open—open the box."

The servant untied the ribbons carefully. Within was a beautiful valentine. The old man stretched his hand for it. It was very handsome, and in the center was a poem that told of love and constancy through all time. The servant read it to him.

"See if there is any address on it—anything to tell where it was sent from."

The old servant looked carefully. There was no address.

"Then she will come to me. I shall see her to-morrow—perhaps to-day."

The rest of his mail remained unnoticed. It was a beautiful winter afternoon and the sunlight shone through the west window into the room where the old man waited, holding the white box, tied with blue and pink ribbons. By and by the servant went out and left him there. When he returned it was near evening. The old man still held the little white box and his face was turned toward the gates of sunset. But his eyes were closed and he was looking through the gates of—eternity.

And perhaps she had come to him, for when Katie's grandmother heard of old Mr. Fessenden she said, reflectively:

"I used to know of a young man by that name more than 40 years ago. He lived in the next town to us and went with a girl whose folks moved to the city just before we did. I didn't know 'em very well, but I heard once that about a year after they came here she died."—Albert Bigelow Paine, in N. Y. Herald.

A CABLE CAR WAS CLANGING ITS BELL WILDLY.

A DAY OF MATING.

St. Valentine's Day, as Celebrated by the Romans, Was the Time to Choose Mates.

Mr. Donce, in his illustrations of Shakespeare, says, regarding St Valentine's day: "It was the practice in ancient Rome, during a greater part of the month of February, to celebrate the Lupercalia, which were feasts in honor of Pan and Juno, whence the latter deity was named Februata, Februalis and Februella. On this occasion, amidst a variety of ceremonies, the names of young women were put in a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed. The pastors of the early Christian church, who by every possible means endeavored to eradicate the vestiges of pagan superstitions, substituted in the present instance the names of the particular saints instead of those of the women, and as the festival of Lupercalia had commenced about the middle of February, they appear to have chosen St Valentine's day for celebrating the new feast, because it occurred at nearly the same time. This is, in part, the opinion of the learned compiler of the lives of the saints. It would seem, however, that it was utterly impossible to extirpate altogether any ceremony to which the common people had been much accustomed, a fact which it is easy to prove in tracing the origin of various other popular superstitions, and according the outline of ancient ceremonies was preserved, but modified by some adaptation to the Christian system. It is reasonable to suppose that the above practice of choosing mates would gradually become reciprocal in the sexes, and that all persons so chosen would be called valentines, from the day on which the ceremony took place."
—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

A SUSPICIOUS COINCIDENCE.

Mrs. Slimdiet—Yes; I got 17 comic valentines to-day, and I shall expect you all to settle up at once.

Chorus of Boarders—But surely, Mrs. Slimdiet, you do not accuse us of sending the valentines?

Mrs. Slimdiet—I make no accusations whatever, gentlemen. I only know that I have 17 boarders.—N. Y. World.

Could Not Understand It.

"There's one thing," said the practical joker, "that I could never understand."

"What is that?"

"Why, when I can pick out such genuinely witty comic valentines to send out to my friends, they should make such blundering and brutal selections to send to me."—Washington Star.

GOOD YEAR AT HAND.

Extraordinary Prosperity in Store for American Farmers.

Chicago Still Is the Greatest Grain and Live Stock Market in the Western World — Figures Prove the Claim.

[Special Chicago Letter.]

Chicago's two great industries are its grain and live stock trades. It was said some years ago that Kansas City and Omaha would outstrip the western metropolis as stock markets and that the same cities, Duluth and Minneapolis would crowd it pretty close as grain markets. Official figures of last year's transactions of the Chicago board of trade and the Union Stock yards, furnished to me by the officers of the two corporations, prove that the Illinois city still is the greatest trading center in produce of every description, and indications that it will remain the leader for many years to come are reliable.

It is possible that the famous Leiter wheat deal, which was floated in April, 1897, and collapsed July 1, 1898, had something to do with the enormous totals of Chicago board of trade bank clearings, but certainly not enough to affect the city's commercial standing. The Leiter deal was responsible for crowding the price of wheat up to $1.55, in the face of government crop reports confidently predicting a yield of 650,000,000 bushels. Elevators were full to overflowing when the collapse came. Levi Z. Leiter, the father of Joseph, otherwise known as the Napoleon of the wheat market, had to come to his son's rescue and mortgaged and sold Chicago real estate to the amount of $6,000,000 in order to save the family name from commercial failure. Complete stagnation followed the collapse, yet in spite of this the total board of trade clearings for the year are but $7,500,000 behind those of 1897, which was a splendid year from a speculative point of view. By months the clearings were as follows:

Date.	Clearings.	Balances.
January	$3,691,005.00	$1,177,761.63
February	6,161,455.38	2,093,118.14
March	4,845,889.09	1,572,608.86
April	7,961,193.75	2,482,872.46
May	16,430,040.00	5,404,678.91
June	11,225,470.00	3,585,782.62
July	4,854,946.25	1,395,512.10
August	5,258,525.00	1,805,237.40
September	3,758,907.50	1,369,075.00
October	3,973,039.33	1,290,106.43
November	2,838,213.75	946,473.16
*December	2,575,735.63	942,240.63
Totals	$72,972,450.64	$24,065,527.34
Preced. year, '97	$80,399,901.25	$26,294,848.01

*One day short.

The foreign demand for food products of every kind was phenomenal during the latter half of 1898; and an overwhelming percentage of the export trade was carried on through Chicago houses. According to the secretary of the board of trade the following were the receipts and shipments of all the leading articles of produce, excepting live stock:

Articles	Received 1898.	Shipped 1898.
Flour, brls	5,316,195	5,032,236
Wheat, bu	35,741,556	28,694,900
Corn, bu	127,426,374	130,897,681
Oats, bu	110,293,647	85,067,626
Rye, bu	4,935,368	4,453,384
Barley, bu	18,116,594	6,755,247
Grass seeds, lbs	97,039,279	78,704,046
Flaxseed, bu	5,461,173	3,366,725
Broomcorn, lbs	11,630,642	6,867,229
Cured meats, lbs	229,005,246	223,627,722
Canned meats, cases	10,589	1,031,482
Dressed beef, lbs	110,286,652	1,060,859,808
Beef, pkgs	1	68,439
Pork, brls	3,017	218,442
Lard, lbs	65,083,445	326,653,221
Cheese, lbs	30,057,448	44,948,166
Butter, lbs	221,579,135	206,461,387
Dressed hogs, No	3,640	123,746
Hides, lbs	75,415,365	126,577,422
Wool, lbs	29,346,948	39,168,416
Coal, tons	7,287,200	845,488
Lumber, 1,000 ft	1,556,647	691,344
Shingles, 1,000	293,151	287,371
Salt, brls	1,993,027	1,629,593
Hay, tons	222,533	10,461
Potatoes, bu	10,914,729	5,626,530
Eggs, cases	2,150,978	1,207,533

The following are semiofficial estimates of the value of the produce received during 1898 and the corresponding totals for the ten preceding years:

	1898.	1897.
Flour	$20,000,000	$14,000,000
Wheat	30,000,000	22,725,000
Corn	37,000,000	29,500,000
Oats	25,000,000	21,500,000
Rye	2,500,000	1,265,000
Barley	6,000,000	5,400,000
Mill stuffs	1,000,000	900,000
Butter	40,000,000	41,165,000
Cheese	7,200,000	6,400,000
Hides	7,500,000	7,000,000
Wool	5,500,000	6,100,000
Flaxseed	5,400,000	4,500,000
Other seed	2,000,000	1,700,000
Broomcorn	700,000	625,000
Salt	1,100,000	1,000,000
Potatoes	1,500,000	1,500,000
Other vegetables	800,000	600,000
Tallow and grease	1,300,000	1,100,000
Hay	2,000,000	2,300,000
Apples	400,000	400,000
California fruits	3,500,000	3,200,000
Other fruits	2,900,000	2,500,000
Hops	600,000	550,000
Eggs	7,700,000	7,500,000
Poultry and game	2,200,000	2,117,000
Live stock	230,000,000	216,349,000
Beef	9,000,000	7,500,000
Lard	2,400,000	2,274,000
Meats (hog)	12,000,000	6,962,000
Totals	$459,000,000	$419,302,000
Total for 1896		268,401,000
Total for 1895		294,193,000
Total for 1894		499,699,000
Total for 1893		469,973,000
Total for 1892		507,000,000
Total for 1891		499,60,000
Total for 1890		471,265,000
Total for 1889		388,000,000
Total for 1888		371,000,000

The Chicago stock yards make an equally gratifying showing. Receipts of all kinds of live stock aggregated over 17,000,000 head, valued at about $230,000,000, and divided as follows:

Cattle	2,485,000
Calves	132,621
Hogs	8,795,239
Sheep	3,607,700
Horses	118,860
Cars	275,100

The capacity of the yards is 75,000,000 cattle, 300,000 hogs, 50,000 sheep and 5,000 horses; and this was tested several times during the year. The average price paid for hogs in May was $4.25 and in December $3.40, the two months representing the highest and lowest quotations. The average price paid for cattle per head was $48; calves, $12; hogs, $9; sheep, $4.50, and horses, $70. The average weight of cattle is reported at about 1,084 pounds; hogs 233 pounds, and sheep 86 pounds.

The common belief that horses are no longer good property is discounted by the fact that 6,000 more horses arrived and were sold at the Union stock yards than in any previous year, and that an average price of $70 was received for them. Part of this increase is accounted for, of course, by the Spanish-American war and the demand for cavalry horses created by it. Many of these animals were bought in the Chicago market, and it goes without saying that Uncle Sam paid full value for every creature he purchased. But leaving the war demand out of consideration, the general tenor of the horse-market was exceedingly healthy in 1898, and prominent horse dealers are of the opinion that 1899 will be the banner year for medium-priced, well-bred animals.

The receipt of 9,000,000 hogs in one market in the course of a single year is nothing short of phenomenal. But still more surprising is the circumstance that each animal sold for $9, a price which should leave a profitable margin for the farmer and stock raiser.

In the sheep section of the yards there has recently been erected a complete dip and pool, whose work is conducted under the control of the government and done under the direct supervision of government agents. Five hundred thousand sheep have been dipped up to January 1, 1899, and all danger from ticks has been effectively removed.

EXCHANGE HALL, CHICAGO BOARD OF TRADE.

Gratifying as this showing must be to the farmers of the central, western and southern states, they must be still more pleased with the predictions of the leading Chicago grain and live-stock operators to the effect that while the speculative market will be dull all through 1899 there will be a steady cash demand for all kinds of grain and stock.

The export trade, which has become an important feature of the produce market, will consume all the surplus products of American farms for at least another twelvemonth at prices that should be satisfactory even to the chronic kicker.

American diplomacy has been instrumental in persuading a number of European governments that western meats are not only wholesome, but superior to the home article. In some instances persuasion had to take the form of threats of retaliation, but the result in every case has been a victory for the American hog and corn-fed cattle. American grain is destined to be used in Europe for some time to come, as the year's Russian and Indian wheat crops do not promise a good yield.

Altogether it looks as if the American farmer had entered upon an era of fat years and prosperity extraordinary. It may, however, be permissible to add that much of his prosperity will depend upon the grain and produce merchants of our large cities who know how to control foreign markets for the benefit of American producers. Chief among these great international commercial agencies is the Chicago board of trade, whose members handle more grain than the merchants of all other western cities combined. Hence upon the judgment, wisdom and disinterestedness of these men must, in a large measure, rest the pecuniary welfare of every tiller of the soil. And that is another reason why producer and dealer should come closer together instead of permitting themselves to drift apart. Their interests are mutual, whatever demagogues may say to the contrary.
G. W. WEIPPIERT.

An Intellectual Effort.

"Don't interrupt me, please," said Senator Sorghum to the young man who had slammed the door.

"I beg your pardon."

"Don't keep talking about it, either," was the irritable rejoinder. "I'm engaged on making a joke. The conundrum is, 'Which is worse in congress, a polygamist or a pull-leg-amist?' and if I can only make up some kind of an answer to it I think it will be pretty good."
—Washington Star.

Didn't Want to Sit.

Bridget—There's a man in the parlor wants to see you, sir.

Mr. Ardup—I'll be there in a minute. Ask him to take a chair.

"Sure, sir, he says he's going to take all the furniture. He's from the installment company."—Brooklyn Life.

SUMATRA TOBACCO.

How the Fragrant Leaf Is Cultivated for the Market in the Islands.

Sumatra, upon the equator, "the halfway house of the world," is one of the most beautifully situated of the isles of the summer seas. The high mountain ridges on the west slope down and spread out in great green plains to the fertile eastern coasts, where the low swamps at the water's edge breed fatal germs of tropical disease. The large settlements and most of the attractive districts are on the west coast, the hills rising steeply from the ocean. Here thrives luxuriantly the coffee tree. Near Deli, on the straits of Malacca, large areas have been devoted to tobacco culture. On the lower east coast estates more than 43,000 coolies toil with the ardor known only to the germ-proof people, in this malarial land.

The wild mountaineers of Sumatra are in striking contrast to the gentle Javanese. When the Dutch would have conquered them they retired to their mountain fastnesses and waited for malaria to lay low the European foe. As seen in Sumatra, tobacco planting, which is the principal agricultural industry, is described as carried on in the most picturesque way in the world. The jungle is first cleared, and this is a costly and difficult undertaking. When the ground has been laid as bare as possible by felling trees and firing the undergrowth, the whole area is plowed by buffalo teams. This must be constantly carried on, as tobacco can only be grown for one year, and then the ground must be allowed to rest for eight or ten years. After plowing the land must be thoroughly drained by means of expensive canals. The tobacco seed is sown in the spring and carefully protected from the sun by means of matting.

When a certain development has been reached the young plants are planted at equal distances apart. The tobacco plant arrives at maturity about the end of June. After the leaves have been gathered they are dried in enormous sheds. These sheds are constructed most artistically of wood, bamboo and matting, and are provided all around the sides with adjustable mats for regulating the supply of air to insure perfect drying. It is the business of the Kling coolies to build these sheds and to keep the roads in order.

The tobacco is then stored, pressed, sorted and packed and finally piled in the buffalo wagons for shipment. It is taken to Belawan, and from here will find its way to all quarters of the globe. It will be treated in factories by modern machinery, will be handled by all sorts and conditions of men and women, and finally smoked by careless, prosaic men, who know nothing of the "summer isles of Eden," to whom Sumatra on pearly seas is but a name.

The Sumatran leaf is never used to make a whole cigar, but because of its beauty and regularity it is much used to make the outside of the "Havana," "Manila," "American" and "German," whatever cigars they may astensibly be called.—Chicago Chronicle.

RESTRICTIONS ON TRADES.

Curious Specimens of Legislation in Great Britain in the Olden Times.

There are many instances of curious acts passed in connection with restrictions on trades and professions, and in some cases an element of humor enters into them when judged by the standards of to-day. The want of confidence in lawyers, which rightly or wrongly is somewhat commonly entertained, is at least as old as the times of Henry VI., for an act was passed in 1461 to reduce the number of attorneys in the eastern counties. The act shows that there were upward of 80 such in Norfolk and Suffolk, and their numbers were mercilessly reduced to six in Norfolk, six in Suffolk and two in Norwich. A statute of Henry VII. (1489) enacted that no butcher should slaughter cattle in any walled town—a restriction likewise extended to Cambridge. As though the gambling of the South sea bubble period had cast its shadow before, an act of 1697 strove to limit the number and restrain the ill practices of brokers and stock jobbers, and after the disaster of that time another act, in 1734, aimed at preventing certain "infamous" practices of stock jobbing.

A law, not of restriction but of relief, was that of 1712, exempting apothecaries from serving the offices of constable, scavenger and other parish duties and from liability of being called upon to act on juries. A bill that passed into law in 1723 provided against journeymen shoemakers pawning boots, shoes, leather and other materials, and establishing rules for regulating them. The matter of servants' certificates of character is still a burning question, and an act of 1792 sought to prevent the fraud of counterfeiting them. Several laws passed in England and Scotland had empowered justices of the peace to fix the wages and piece work of artificers and other workers, and this arbitrary power was withdrawn under George III. (1813).—Cornhill Magazine.

Deserving Death.

"I've come to kill a printer," said the little man.

"Any printer in particular?" asked the foreman.

"Oh, any one will do; I would prefer a small one, but I've got to make some sort of a bluff at fight or leave home, since the paper called my wife's pink tea a 'swill affair.'"—Indianapolis Journal.

The Catchall.

"I trusted you with my heart," said she, with bitter sobs, "and what have you done with it?"

His laugh for harshness could have given a crosscut saw the deckhead.

"Have you looked in the top drawer of the bureau?" he asked.—Cincinnati Enquirer.